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Christian Monitor;

Containing an Earnest

EXHORTATION

TO AN

Holy Life:

With some DIRECTIONS in
Order thereto.

Written in a plain and easy Stile, for all
Sorts of People.

*Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without
which no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14.*



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The Christian Monitor, &c.

CHAP. I.

An Exhortation to an HOLY LIFE, with Motives thereto.

IT is very sad to consider, not only how few Nations there are in the World which profess Christianity, but also of those who do profess it, how few there are, comparatively speaking, that live according to their Profession: Wherefore it well becomes all Christ's faithful Servants, especially the Ministers of his Gospel, to use their utmost Endeavours, by Life and Doctrine, by public and private Exhortations, by Preaching and Writing, and by all the Ways they are capable of, to promote true Piety and Holiness among all Sorts of Men, whether High or Low, Rich or Poor, without which no Man can be happy, either in this World or that which is to come. And though I well know that we abound, Thanks be to God, in Multitudes of excellent Books written to this End; yet such short Instructions as these that follow are not to be condemned as useless; since they will, in all likelihood, be more generally dispersed, and that amongst the very meanest of the People, and may more easily be read and remem-

bered by such as have neither Time to read large Books, nor Money to buy them. With such as these I have Occasion often to converse, and for their Sakes chiefly it is that I publish this little Treatise; being encouraged thereto by some pious Persons, both of City and Country, who intend to give some of them away to poor People about them, and thought others might do the like. And may it please God to give a Blessing to such a mean Undertaking as this, and succeed it to the Good of Souls, I shall little regard the Censures of the Curious; remembering the Saying I have somewhere met with of a devout Writer to this Purpose: That he was desirous his Book should be scattered abroad upon Pedlars-Stalls, and thence come into the Hands of common People, for the Increase of Knowledge and Piety, rather than be solemnly laid up and buried in the Libraries of the Learned.

Wherefore, without any more Preface, I shall address myself to you, for whose Sake I write these Lines, as a Persuasive to an Holy and Religious Life. Now in order thereto, let me beseech you to look back upon your Lives past, and call yourselves to an Account, whether it has been your Care and Study to live in such a godly Manner, as becomes those who are baptized in the Name of Christ, and from him are called Christians. Have you well considered what is the Meaning of this Name, and what Engagements you lie under to an holy Life, by taking it upon you in Baptism? And do you keep well in Mind your Baptismal Vow, wherein you renounced the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and promised to be Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants, and so continue all the Days of your Life? Have you so far understood and considered these Things, that you have made it your chief Business to walk accordingly? Do you watch carefully,

fully, and fight manfully against your spiritual Enemies? Do you live as those that believe the Gospel, sincerely endeavouring in all Things to know the Will of God, and to do it? Since you take Christ's Name in your Mouth, are you careful to depart from all Iniquity? In a Word, is it your greatest Study and Design, to please and glorify God, and to work out your own Salvation? If your Consciences can truly witness for you, that it is indeed so, and that if at any Time you fall short, or do amiss, you are heartily grieved at it, and do daily labour to amend and grow better: If it be thus with you, then bless God for his Grace and Mercy, hold on and prosper, and fear not but God will be with you; he will own you as his Children, and, for his Son Jesus's Sake, will both pardon your Sins, and assist you by his Grace; he will guide you by his Counsel, and at length receive you into Glory.

But pray deal faithfully with your own Souls, and tell me, has it not been quite otherwise with you? Have you not contented yourselves with the bare Name and Profession of Christianity, and in the mean Time led an ill Course of Life, directly contrary to your Profession? Have you not lived in wilful Ignorance of your Duty, or in gross Sins against your Knowledge? Do not the Temptations of the Devil, the Allurements of the World and the Flesh, many times prevail more with you than the Commands of Almighty God, and the Voice of your own Consciences? Are you not wont to neglect God's Worship and Service, both in the Church and at Home? Yea, do you not profane his holy Name by Swearing and Cursing? Are you not often guilty of Lying and Slandering, of Cozening and Cheating, if not of downright Stealing? Do you not in your Anger use railing and reviling

Language? Or do you not live in Envy and Malice, seeking to be revenged of those that have done you any Injury? Do you not allow yourselves in Drunkenness and Whoredom, or some other known and wilful Sin? To be short, is there not something or other in this World that you love more than you do God himself, and his Son Jesus? Are you not much more concerned for your Bodies, than for your precious Souls? And do you not more earnestly seek for Food and Raiment, and the good Things of this Life, than after that eternal Kingdom of Glory, which God hath promised to his faithful Servants in the World to come?

If this indeed be your Case, I beseech you make a Stand, and consider well what you have been doing; what a sad and dangerous Condition you have brought yourselves into, and what the End of it will be, if you hold on in such evil Courses. Humbly beg of God to make you duly sensible of your Sin and Danger, and to keep the Sense thereof so close to your Minds, that you may be brought not only to mourn for your Sins, but to loath and abhor them, and utterly to forsake them; henceforth resolving, by the Grace of God, wholly to give up yourselves to his Service, and to walk stedfastly in those holy good Ways which he has appointed you. This is that to which I do most earnestly desire to persuade you. And that I may do my utmost to prevail with you, I shall lay before you some very weighty Arguments, which I request you to weigh seriously as you read them, and God grant they may have their due Effect upon the Heart of every Reader. *Amen.*

I. That you may be prevailed with to become God's faithful Servants, consider, first, *That this was the great End for which God made you, and keeps you alive, and gives you so many Mercies of all Sorts.*

You

You can tell, I hope, that God made you, and that he made you to serve him, by living according to his Commandments. These are some of the first Things which Children learn; and it were well, if, when they are grown up to be Men and Women, they would habituate themselves seriously to think of them, and practise accordingly. The wise God has made all Creatures for some good End or other, and has fitted them all for those Ends and Purposes for which he made them. To Man therefore he has given the Use of Reason, chiefly to fit him for Religion, and so render him capable of knowing, loving, and serving his great Creator and Benefactor: And it is Religion which makes the great Difference between a Man and a Beast: For brute Creatures have no Knowledge of God, no Regard to him, but are wholly led by their Senses, and mind nothing but what is before them here in this World. But the poorest Man on Earth, who hath the Use of his Reason, is near a-kin to the very Angels themselves; his Nature is like theirs, and but a little below them; so that he may be much taken up in the same holy Works that they are employed in, even in loving, and praising, and adoring the great and good God. To this End he may study both the Works and Word of God, which reveal him to us, and should continually put us in mind of him. And all the good Things we enjoy should still make us sensible of the Goodness of God from whom they come; and fill our Hearts with Love and Thankfulness, and our Mouths with Blessing and Praise. This is the most proper Use of our Reason, and this God most justly expects from us reasonable Creatures; and even this the poor Man may render without any Hindrance to his daily Labours; and may still keep such an awful Sense

of God upon his Mind, as may restrain him from wilful Sin, and make him careful always to please his Maker. And so our Reason was given to bridle and govern our Appetites, our Lusts and Passions; that we should not be led away into Gluttony and Drunkenness, into Wantonness and Uncleaness, nor into Rage and Fury, like brute Beasts that have no Understanding; but should live soberly and chastely, quietly and peaceably with all Men, doing them all the Good we can. For such holy Purposes as these chiefly was our Reason bestowed on us, and therefore in this Manner ought it to be employed. Certainly, since God hath made us of a Nature so much better than Birds and Beasts, he expects from us other Works and Services than he does from them. They know nothing of God that made them, nor have they any Knowledge of another Life after this, but when they die, there is an End of them. But to us hath God given immortal Souls; of more Value than the whole World; and for this End hath He created us, that we might serve and honour him here in this Life, and so may live with him, and enjoy him for ever in the World to come.

Now if this be the End of our creation, ought we not to live up to it? Do we not see all other Things answer the End for which they were made? The Sun gives Light by Day, and the Moon by Night. The Earth brings forth Corn and Grass, and the Trees bear Fruit. The Horse, the Cow, and the Sheep, with many other Creatures, afford us much Service and Benefit; and shall Man alone be useless and unfruitful, living to no good Purpose? While other Creatures are all so ready to serve us, shall we not chearfully serve Him that made us for his own Service? Surely we cannot think that the wise God sent us into the World only to eat
and

and drink, to sleep and play, or to work hard for a poor Livelihood. If this were all, we had better have been made brute Creatures, or never have been made at all. Much less can we think that the holy God made us on purpose to sin against him, to dishonour his Name, and provoke him to Anger. He did not give us Reason to make us crafty and cunning for the World, that we might know how to cozen and cheat our Neighbours. He did not give us Tongues to swear and curse with, or to talk foolishly and filthily: Let us not then use them to any such ill Purposes. Since God has given us precious immortal Souls, let us not live like Beasts that perish, wallowing in the Mire of base Lusts and sensual Pleasures. By this means we become worse than the Brutes themselves, for we debase our Nature, we abuse our Reason to our own Shame and Hurt, and to God's Displeasure. Thus we cross the End of our Creation, and are more stupid and ungrateful than the very Ox or Ass: *For they know their Owner*, and do good Service to those that keep and feed them, *Isa. i. 2, 3.* O let us not give God Cause to complain of us, as he there does of the *Jews*, that he *nourished and brought up Children, and they rebelled against him*: Think how grievous it is to you who have Children, after all your Care and Kindness, after all your Cost and Labour, to have them prove stubborn and disobedient, loose and idle Prodigals. O see then that ye be not such towards your heavenly Father, who made you and preserves you, and every Day renews his Mercies upon you. He keeps us alive, and makes our Lives comfortable. He gives and continues to us our Reason and Senses, our Health and Strength, Food and Raiment, and all the good Things we enjoy. He supplies our Wants, and helps us in all our Distresses. He gives us Light by Day, and Rest by Night. He enables us to follow our Callings, and
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gives a Blessing to our Labours, that we may provide for ourselves and Families. And does not this good God well deserve all the Love and Service which we can possibly render him? O how can we find in our Hearts wilfully to offend him, who thus delights in doing us Good! Foolish and unthankful Wretches we are, thus to requite the Lord for all his Loving-kindness. We would not deal so with any Friend or Neighbour on Earth, that had been always kind and loving to us. Are not Servants bound to work for them who maintain them and pay them Wages? And ought not Children to obey their Parents who begat them, and brought them up? How much more then ought we to obey God our Father, who gave us Life at first, and still prolongs it from one Day to another, when he could in a Moment cut us off in our Sins, and throw us into Hell? But in much Mercy he spares us, and gives us Space to repent, and is very unwilling to destroy us, and therefore waits long to be gracious to us. O then let his Patience, and his Goodness, at last have this happy Effect upon us; let it lead us to true Repentance, and ever hereafter engage us to Diligence and Constancy in his Service, *Rom. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9.*

II. To which Purpose consider again, that *this was the End for which God sent his Son Jesus into the World*, even to seek and save us lost and miserable Sinners, to bring us to Repentance and Newness of Life, that so we might be restored to the Love and Favour of God, which we had lost by sinning against him. Our first Parents *Adam* and *Eve* were created in a holy and happy State, but they fell from it by sinning against God, and so came all Misery into the World; and then did our heavenly Father take Pity on us, and sent his

own

own Son out of his Bosom to be our Saviour and Redeemer, to reform us from our Sins, and so to deliver us from Misery. First, he will make us holy, and then we shall be made happy. For as Man lost his Happiness by disobeying God's Command, so he must recover it by becoming obedient to his Will in all Things. To this End hath the Lord Jesus fully revealed God's Will to us when we were in Ignorance and Darknes. He hath given us holy Precepts for the Rule of our Life; and made most rich and precious Promises to persuade us to our Duty, and denounced dreadful Threatnings to affright us from Wickedness.

And when we had deserved the Wrath of God for our Sins, then did Jesus Christ shed his most precious Blood to make Atonement for us, and to obtain our Pardon and Forgiveness. He died for our Offences, and rose again for our Justification, *Rom. iv. 25.* And in his Gospel he hath given full Assurance of God's Good-will to Mankind, that He will be merciful to us, and pardon us, if we truly repent of our Sins, and forsake them. Thus hath Christ opened a Door of Hope for us, to encourage us to return to God: For if there had been no Hopes of Mercy, we should never have been drawn to Repentance, but, even like the Devils themselves, should have remained full of Hatred and Malice against God, utterly despairing of Relief from him. But whilst the Death of Christ does so much engage and encourage us to forsake our Sins, it gives not the least Encouragement to our Continuance in them. Let us not think that Christ died for our Sins, that we might have Liberty to live in them, and yet be saved at the last. No; but he came to save us from our Sins, not in them. He makes us blessed by turning us from our Iniquities. He died to redeem us from a vain and evil Conversation; to purify

purify our Hearts, and reform our Lives, and make us a peculiar People, zealous of good Works, *Matthew* i. 21. *Acts* iii. 26. *Tit.* ii. 14. *1 Peter* i. 18.

The Death of Christ for us vile Sinners, shews the infinite Love of God in finding out this Way for our Salvation: But then it shews also what an evil Thing Sin is, and how hateful to God, since he would not pardon us without the sufferings of his own dear Son on our Account. And therefore, if the Consideration of all this does not bring us to hate and abhor our Sins, and to love and serve our God and Saviour, we are never like to have any Benefit by Christ's Death. All our Professions of loving Him, and believing in Him, will stand us in no stead, without obeying Him. True saving Faith in Christ, is that *which works by Love*, both to God and to our Neighbours. Christ accounts none to be his Friends, but those that keep his Commandments, and to such only will He grant Pardon and Salvation, *Gal.* v. 6. *John* xv. 14. *Heb.* v. 9. *1 John* iii. 8.

Since then, the ever-blessed Jesus, the Son of God, came down from Heaven, became a Man, and died a most painful Death upon the Cross, that He might save us from Sin and Misery; shall we not accept of him as our Lord and Saviour, who came to deliver us from the Power of the Devil, and our own Lusts, to make us the Children of God, and Heirs of Glory; which is a thousand times greater Deliverance than that of the *Israelites* from the *Egyptian* Bondage? Will you not be moved by all that Christ hath done and suffered for you? Shall not his Love constrain you to love Him, and to hate all Sin, which was the Cause of his Suffering? Will you tread under Foot his most precious Blood, and even crucify him afresh, and again put

put him to open Shame? Thus in some sort do wicked Men use their Saviour, whilst they go on in their Sins, which are so displeasing to Him. They that lie and cozen for a little Gain, what do they do but, like *Judas*, sell Christ for Money? They that live in Hatred and Malice, and do Mischief to their Neighbours, do in effect run the Spear into Christ's Side, and drive Nails into his Hands and Feet. And they that give themselves to Riot and Drunkenness, do even mingle Gall and Vinegar for Him to drink. They do all that in them lies by their sinful Pleasures to put Him again into Agonies and Pains. But on the other hand, it is a Delight to our Saviour to see us humbled for our Sins, and resolved to forsake them. He will readily and effectually intercede for us with our heavenly Father, who is most willing to receive returning Prodigals. There is Joy in Heaven when Sinners on Earth repent. Even this our Return to God by true Repentance, is the best Recompence we can make to our blessed Saviour for all his Pains and Sufferings. When *the Pleasure of the Lord prospers in his Hand* by the Conversion of Sinners, *He then sees the Travel of his Soul, and is satisfied*, *Isaiah lxiii. 10, 11.* And shall we not afford this Satisfaction to our Redeemer, who hath undergone so much for our Sakes, and still out of his tender Love to our Souls, follows us with such earnest Invitations to come to Him for Life and Happiness? Could we deny Him this most reasonable Request, if we saw him now in Person standing before us, beseeching us to return and live? And this He now does by his Spirit and by his Ministry.

III. Therefore consider, that *this also is the End for which the Holy Ghost is given, and all the Means of Grace afforded, even to sanctify our Hearts,*
and

and make us an holy and obedient People. God knows the Weakness and Corruption of our Nature, and therefore in great Mercy he affords the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, to enlighten our Minds and purify our Hearts; to renew and change our Nature, and guide us in the Ways of Holiness here, that so we may be fitted for eternal Happiness with the most Holy God in the Life to come, *John* iii. 3, 5. *Rom.* viii. 9. And for this End were the Holy Scriptures written by Men assisted and inspired by the Holy Ghost, to be a Light to our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Path, to direct us in the plain Way to everlasting Life, *2 Tim.* iii. 15, 16, 17. And the Holy Sacraments were appointed for the Increase of Grace to all that make a right Use of them. And our blessed Saviour did at first send abroad his Apostles to preach the Gospel to all the World, and hath ever since continued a Succession of Ministers in his Church, whose standing Office is to administer the Word and Sacraments, to watch over the Souls of his People, to instruct and admonish them both in public and private, and to use their utmost Diligence to bring them to the Knowledge and Love of God, and of his Son Jesus. And God is ever ready to accompany their Endeavours with his Blessing. Do you not often find his good Spirit putting good Thoughts and Motions into your Mind, inclining you to that which is holy and good, checking and restraining you when you are running into Evil? But, on the other hand, it is the evil Spirit, even the Devil himself, that tempts you to Sin, and would hinder you from your Duty. It is the Devil that tempts Men to Pride and Malice, and to all manner of Wickedness. For he being a proud, malicious, and most wicked Spirit, would have Men to be like himself, that so they may be forever miserable with him. Will you not then resist

the Devil, the great Enemy of your Souls, and will you not be led and guided by God's good Spirit, and follow his Motions, and the Directions of his Word, which lead to Happiness? O do not grieve this blessed Spirit, who alone can give you true Comfort; do not resist and quench his Motions, nor provoke him to depart from you, and leave you to your own Lusts, and to the Power of Satan, who seeks your Ruin!

Moreover, as the Devil has his Instruments to draw Men to Wickedness, one ill Man tempting another; so Ministers are sent from God, to draw you to Righteousness and Holiness. They are Ambassadors and Messengers of Christ, and do in his Name beseech you to be reconciled to God, who is most willing to be reconciled to you, if you will but cast away those wicked Works which provoke him to Anger, 2 Cor. v. 20. O how will it rejoice the Hearts of your Ministers, that truly love your Souls, to see the Success of their Labours; to have you come to them enquiring what you most do to be saved, declaring your Repentance for your former evil Courses, and your Resolution henceforth to become new Creatures? Certainly we exhort you to nothing but what is highly reasonable, and for your own Benefit, whilst we persuade you to return to the Favour of God. Why then will you not hearken to us? If a Message of Mercy should be sent you from the King, when you are in Danger of Death for Rebellion, would you not most gladly and thankfully receive it? And will you not be as thankful and obedient to the King of Kings? and as wise to save your Souls, as to preserve your Bodies?

And besides his Word and Ministers, God also pleads with you by his Providence to bring you to Repentance.

Repentance. Sometimes He sends Afflictions to correct you for your Faults, to shew you the Evil of Sin, and draw you home to himself; and at other times He sends many Mercies, as I have told you, to soften your Hearts, to engage and allure you to his Service; and such good Use we ought to make of all God's Dealings with us.

IV. Consider farther *what Engagements you lie under to an holy Life by your own Profession, Promises and Vows.* You profess and call yourselves Christians, the Disciples and Followers of Christ: Ought you not then to follow his Example, and obey his Commands, if you will make good that Name? You will think it a great Disgrace not to be taken for Christians, but for *Turks or Jews.* Beware then lest you bring this Disgrace upon yourselves, by an unchristian Temper of Mind, and an ill Course of Life. If you are false or cruel, covetous or lustful, like *Turks or Jews*, it matters little what you call yourselves. He is not a Christian that is one outwardly, but he that has the same Mind and Spirit that was in Christ Jesus. God will not at the last Day judge of Men by their Names and Titles, but by their Hearts and Lives; only it will go much worse with a Man that calls himself a Christian, and yet lives like a Heathen or Infidel.

And pray consider how by your Baptism you are solemnly listed under Christ's Banner, to fight against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; and by the keeping this Vow, you shew yourselves to be Christians indeed: But if you are led away by the Temptations of Satan, and do his Works; if you are insnared by the Vanities of the World, or the Lusts and Pleasures of the Flesh, you do in Effect renounce your Baptism.

Besides

Besides this, Have you not renewed the same Vow at the holy Communion, there openly professing your Belief in Christ crucified, and promising Obedience to him? If you have not received this holy Sacrament, tho' you have been long at Years of Discretion, you then shew yourselves by this Neglect to be no obedient Disciples of Christ, since you do not obey his plain Command, *To do this in Remembrance of him*, Luke xxii. 19. And indeed, I fear, that many careless People will not come to the Communion, because they think it will bind them to lead such a strict and holy Life as they have no mind to. But do they not cast off Jesus Christ from being their Master, who look upon his Commands as too strict and severe, and will not promise to obey Him? Yea, do they not thereby even disown their Baptism, by which they were bound to this Obedience? So that the same Reason which keeps them from the Communion, it is likely, would keep them from being baptized, if it were yet to be done. And what sort of Christians are they that would reject Christian Baptism, because it engages them to lead an holy Life?

If you are not guilty of this Neglect, but do sometimes come to the Lord's Supper, to keep up the Remembrance of his Death and Sufferings, then pray consider, that by receiving his holy Sacrament, you do solemnly renew your Vows to be Christ's faithful Servants and Disciples, and to walk in sincere Obedience to all his holy Laws, as you hope for Salvation by his Death. Wherefore may I not well beseech you to use all due Care to live according to this your Promise and Engagement? What a Shame is it for a Man to be false to his Word, much more to his Oath? O do not then break that Oath which you have made to God himself, by taking his holy Sacraments; and call to mind

if you have not sometimes on a sick Bed, or in some great Danger, made the same Promise and Vow; and has not God spared you to see how you would perform that Vow? Take heed then of abusing his Mercy, and breaking your Promise.

Moreover, I might shew how your professing to believe the Creed engages you to live well, according to the holy Faith you profess, *which is a Doctrine according to Godliness.*

But lastly, The very Prayers you put up to God, lay the same Engagements on you, even to serve and please this God whom you worship. To instance briefly in the Lord's Prayer: whilst we call God *Our Father*, &c. ought we not to love and honour Him, to obey Him, and submit to Him, as our heavenly Father? Whilst we pray that his *Name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his Will done in Earth as it is in Heaven*; ought we not ourselves to honour his Name, and advance his Kingdom, by obeying his Laws, and by doing his Will, constantly and chearfully, as the Angels do in Heaven, to the utmost of our Power? Praying for *daily Bread*, teaches our Dependence upon God, and engages us to serve Him by whom we are maintained. When we pray to God to *forgive our Trespases, as we forgive others*, this strictly binds us to forgive those that offend us, as ever we hope for Mercy from God. And when we pray *not to be led into Temptation, but delivered from Evil*; this should restrain us from running into Temptation, and make us careful to avoid all Sin, and the Occasions of it. To the same Purpose I might also mention the Prayers of the Church, to which I hope you come frequently. Therein you begin with the Confession of your Sins, and ought you not to forsake, as well as to confess them? And in the End of the Confession you pray God, *for Christ's sake, to grant that*

you may lead godly, righteous, and sober Lives. And almost in every Prayer you will find somewhat to this Effect. Now I hope you are in good earnest in these your Prayers, else you mock God, and affront Him, instead of worshipping Him, and pleasing Him. But if you do heartily desire these Things which you pray for, then you will do your Part for the Attainment of them, and will diligently endeavour to live in so holy and good a Manner, as you pray that you may do. And if you thus add Diligence to your Prayers, God's Grace will never be wanting for your Assistance.

V. Consider also how just and equal all God's Commandments are; such as our own Reason cannot but approve of, being most agreeable to us as reasonable Creatures. To instance in the chief of them. Is it not most just and fit that we should love God above all, who is the best and most perfect of all Beings, and from whom we receive all good Things? Ought we not to pray to Him, who alone can hear and help us, and to give Thanks and Praises to Him, who is the Father of Mercies? Is it not most reasonable that Children should obey their Parents, and Subjects their Rulers? And that all Men should live in Peace and Love with one another, and speak truly, and deal honestly, as they would be dealt with? Is it not most fit and decent for a Man to eat and drink moderately, so as makes most for his Health? to be modest and chaste in all his Conversation? Will not every Man's own Reason acknowledge the Equity and Fitness of these and the like Precepts? And for some that do seem more severe, there may be given very good Reasons for them also: So that plainly, all God's Commands are the wise and wholesome Counsels of a most tender Father, who forbids his Children nothing

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thing but what is hurtful, and requires nothing of them but what makes for their own Good; *even to deal justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with their God,* Mic. vi. 8. *Christ's Yoke is easy, and his Burden light,* Matt. xi. 30. God's Service is perfect Freedom, as we daily stile it in our Prayers: And his *Commandments are not grievous,* 1 John v. 3. Shall we not then be so dutiful to our heavenly Father, yea, so wise for our own Good, as to obey these most reasonable and gracious Laws which he hath given us? So just and equal they are, that we cannot break them without offering a kind of Violence to ourselves, and going contrary to the Reason of our Mind: *They are Light to the Eyes, and Joy to the Heart, sweeter to a good Man than Honey, or the Honey-comb.* As suitable are God's Commands to our Nature, and as useful and healthful to our Souls, as the most wholesome Food to our Bodies. And for a Man to direct his whole Carriage and Behaviour according to the Laws of God, is as much his Wisdom, as it is to go clothed in decent Apparel, and to eat and drink what is good for his Nourishment. But, on the other hand, for one to run naked about the Street, to fill his Mouth with Mire and Dirt, and to cut and mangle his own Flesh, is not a greater Sign of Folly and Madness, than for a Man to live according to his own Lusts, rather than after the Laws of God, which are so agreeable to our Reason, and do so plainly conduce to our truest Interest and Advantage, both in this Life, and that to come; as will appear by what follows.

VI. Consider therefore, in the next Place, that it is a most certain Truth, *That the leading an holy and good Life, is in all Respects very greatly for a Man's own Benefit and Comfort, even in this present World: Godliness is profitable for all Things.* It makes for

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the Quiet of our Minds, the Health of our Bodies, the Increase of our Estates, and procures us much Credit and Esteem, much Love and Good-will, among our Neighbours. Yea, it commonly brings along with it all Manner of Blessings, makes the Enjoyment of them more sweet and pleasant, keeps off a great deal of Trouble, which wicked Men bring upon themselves, and affords much Support and Ease under those Afflictions which the Providence of God may lay upon us. Insomuch that no Man, of what Rank or Condition soever he be, can live a truly comfortable Life, except he lead an holy and good Life. All this is frequently taught in Scripture, and may easily be manifested by clear Reason. Or if that be not sufficient, it is also most plainly to be discerned by daily Experience, that they who truly fear God have much more Peace and Comfort in this World, than wicked and loose Livers, who make no Conscience of their Ways.

If I should make the Comparifon only betwixt a sober Man and a Drunkard, which do you think has the better of it in this Life? How often do the great Drinkers not only waste their Estates, but destroy their Health, weaken their Brains, and shorten their Lives? How often do they fall into Quarrels, get Wounds and Bruises, and sometimes Death itself, either by Fighting, or by one sad Accident or other? Sometimes the very Children in the Street run after them, shouting and making Sport with them; and if you follow them to their own Homes, what Disturbance and Mischief do they make there? What Swearing and Cursing, what Brawling and Scolding, what Quarrelling and Fighting is there? What Outcries and Lamentations do Wife and Children make, who now perhaps are glad to get away for fear of their Lives, as before they

they sat starving for want of that Money which these ill Husbands waste in the Alehouse? (a Sin and a Shame it is to those that entertain them!) And after they have lived a while at this wild and wicked Rate, the next News commonly is, that either for Debt or Disorder, they are laid up in Prison, and sometimes by those very People in whose Houses they drank away all they got. And now they are forced to live upon Bread and Water, and linger out a miserable hungry Life, in a cold stinking Dungeon, till either the Charity of Friends, or Death itself, releases them thence. And by the way, is this such a pleasant Life, that it is worth being damned for in Hell-Torments to all Eternity? Of which afterwards.

Thus also might I tell of the sad Effects of Whoredom, which is commonly followed with Poverty and Disgrace, and many times with a filthy loathsome Disease, which makes Men rot above Ground. And thus too angry, proud, malicious and revengeful People are a continual Torment to themselves, and to all about them, and seldom have any Peace or Quiet, either with their Neighbours, or in their own Families. The like may be shewn of all other Vices, which are still wont to bring their own Punishment along with them; to say nothing of what is, or ought to be inflicted by the Magistrate, especially upon some wicked People, such as Thieves and Murderers, Traitors and Rebels, who seldom escape the Hands of public Justice. *But who will hurt Men if they be Followers of that which is good?* Or what Hurt does a Man bring upon himself by living soberly and chastely, by fearing God and honouring the King? What Mischief does a Man get by minding his own Business, and living quietly and peaceably among his Neighbours? Nay, how happily may we see even some of the meanest

Sort of People live, that are diligent in their Callings, and sober and temperate, and careful to please God, and keep a good Conscience in all their Ways? Very seldom it is that they are pinched with much Want: Or if they should fall into a low Condition, yet all good People that know them are ready to pity and relieve them; and will often trust them with Money or Goods till they are able to pay. And every body is willing to employ an honest and industrious Man, so that he shall seldom want Work or Trading. But idle riotous People, that follow Whoring and Drinking, Gaming and Cheating, and Stealing, that neglect God's Service, and profane the Lord's Day, being often in the Alehouse when they should be at Church, these are the People, if you observe it, that do commonly fall into the basest Beggary and Misery; and Men do but little pity them, because they brought it all upon themselves. O how happy might all Sorts of People be, in a very great measure, even at present, if they would but become truly religious and good? It is their own Sin and Folly, their Lusts and Passions, that occasion most of those Troubles and Miseries which they meet with; though I know they are used to cry out on their hard Fortune, and to lay the Blame upon others, and sometimes to murmur against God himself. But they consider not how they provoke God to Anger daily by their heinous Sins, and therefore may justly feel his heavy Judgments for the same, besides all the Mischiefs which naturally follow upon Wickedness. And this makes their Condition to be sad indeed; that they are always liable to the Wrath of God, and may justly expect his Vengeance to fall upon them, to strip them of all their Comforts, and throw them into the worst Calamities.

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But on the contrary, here, above all, lies the good Man's Security and Comfort, that he enjoys the Blessings and Favours of Almighty God, and therefore is sure to want nothing that is truly good for him. So it is promised *Psal. lxxxiv. 11, 12. Matt. vi. 33. They that first seek the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness of it, shall have all that is needful added to them.* So that a poor Man can take no surer Course to provide for himself and Family, than to become truly religious; for though he may not have great Things in the World, yet he shall have Food convenient. And then, which is better than all, he shall have God's Blessing with what he enjoys, and this will afford him more true *Content and Comfort* in that little he has, than a wicked Man can find in all his great Treasure. *Godliness with Contentment* is the greatest *Gain*, *Psal. xxxvii. 16. 1 Tim. vi. 6.* A poor Man that has only *Jacob's* Wish, Food to eat, and Raiment to put on, if also he has *Jacob's* Piety, and takes the Lord for his God, and lives in his Fear and Service, and enjoys the Sense of his Favour, how blessed is the State of this Man? How chearfully may he live at all times, notwithstanding his Poverty? What though his Dwelling be mean, his Fare somewhat hard and coarse, and his Cloathing very plain; yet, whilst he loves God sincerely, and worships him duly and devoutly, he may even turn his Cottage into a Palace, yea, a Temple; and the blessed God will visit him with his Presence, will accept of his Services, and refresh him with the Light of his Countenance. And upon this Knowledge and Enjoyment of God it is, that the true Comfort of a Man's Life depends. Whatever his outward Condition be, it is this alone which gives inward Peace and Satisfaction to his Mind, and sweetens all his Mercies; and above all Things bears up his Heart under

under those Afflictions he meets with. For the best of Men must expect their Share of outward Troubles in this World, such as Sicknefs and Pain, Loss of Friends and Estate, with the like; these are the Calamities common to all. But here the good Man has clearly the Advantage, since he looks upon all that befalls him as coming from the Hand of a most wise and gracious God, who knows what is best for him, and to whose Will he freely resigns himself and all his Affairs; saying with his blessed Master, *Not my Will, O God, but thine be done.* Yea, he receives Affliction as sent in Kindness to correct him for his Faults, to exercise and increase his Graces, and so to prepare him for Glory. And here is the great Benefit of Religion, that it teaches a Man whither to go for Relief and Comfort in his Straits and Difficulties, even to his great and good God, who is most able and ready to help his People in all Times of Trouble. This we still read in Scripture was the Course of holy Men. And they found it was not in vain. And to this Day will God's faithful Servants find the good Effects of thus devoutly applying themselves to God by Prayer. *For his Eyes are ever upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Cry.* He takes Pity on them, comforts and supports them. He will lay no more upon them than He enables them to bear; and in his good Time He supplies their Wants, and delivers them from their Afflictions. Yea, He turns them into Blessings, and makes *all work together for their Good*, as He has promised to them that *love Him*, Rom. viii. 28. O what Happiness it is to be acquainted with God, to have a due Sense of his Providence, so as to rely on it and approve it!

But how sad is the Condition of a wicked Man, who has no such Knowledge of God, no Love to
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Him, nor any Expectations of Help and Relief from Him? Even in his greatest Prosperity he is a very miserable Man, whilst he lives without God in this World: For he feels himself to be so indeed, when he falls into any great Calamity, and knows not which Way to turn himself for Help and Comfort. For as Wickedness still brings Men into Misery (as I have before shewn) so there it leaves them in the most wretched forlorn Condition. And the ill Temper of their Minds adds Weight and Load to their Calamities, and grievously encreases the Smart of them. The Sense of their own Guilt sometimes torments their Consciences, and fills them with Fear and Horror: Sometimes they rage and fret against those that bring on their Sufferings, and sometimes they even blaspheme God himself, and murmur against his Providence. Whilst the good Man, with *Job*, blesses God in all Afflictions; these are ready to follow the Counsel of his Wife, even to *curse God and die*. For, being full of Anguish and Despair, they are at their Wit's End, and weary of their Lives, as we read of *Cain* and *Judas*, and such like, both in Scripture and other History. For my Part, I do verily think, that next to the Devils and those in Hell, there are no Creatures in the World more miserable than wicked and ungodly People; and whilst we see what the common Fruit of Sin is here on Earth, we may easily be convinced that it leads to Hell and Damnation hereafter. And all this do Men madly and wilfully run into by their own evil Doings; even as a Man that thrusts his Hand into the Fire, is like to feel Pain and Smart. *By forsaking God, they forsake their own Mercies; and sinning against Him, they wrong their own Souls; yea, their Bodies too, and all their Concerns.* Thus you see that an holy Life is most profitable for us, even in this present World, pre-

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venting much Evil, and bringing all Manner of Good along with it. Or, if a Man should fall into such hard Times as to suffer merely for Religion and a good Conscience, he shall then commonly find such wonderful Comfort and Satisfaction of Mind, that he will triumph and rejoice in the midst of his Sufferings; as we know the Apostles and primitive Christians did, and that especially in Hope of the glorious Reward laid up for good Men in Heaven. But that brings me to the next Consideration I shall mention:

Lastly, namely, *That an holy Life, through the rich Mercy of God, will render us perfectly and eternally blessed in the World to come; whereas a wicked Course of Life leads to eternal Misery and Torment.* According as we live in this World, so must we fare in the next; for this Life is a State of Trial in order to Eternity. Even at Death a good Man has ground of much Comfort, having the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Sense of God's Love, so that, with St. Stephen, he may commit his Soul into the Hands of the Lord Jesus, who is ready to receive him. But how sad is it with a wicked Man, when besides all the Pains of the Body, his Mind is tormented with the Remembrance of his Sins, and with the Fear of God's Wrath? But the great Difference will be made at the Day of Judgment, when the *Sheep shall be set at Christ's right Hand, and the Goats on the left*; as you have it described, *Matt. xxv. 31, &c.* To those on the right Hand, that is, the Pious and Good, will be pronounced that joyful Sentence, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* And then shall they enter into that most glorious Kingdom, where neither Sin nor Sorrow shall ever disturb them more, where they shall never feel nor fear any Manner of Evil or Pain, either of

Soul or Body ; but shall be admitted into the immediate Presence of God, where there is all Fullness of Joy for evermore. They shall have such a clear Knowledge of the ever-blessed God, and such a lively Sense of his infinite Perfections, as will fill them with Admiration, Love and Praise : and they shall feel the Love of God and their Saviour so fully shed abroad upon them, as shall raise their Hearts to the very utmost Heights of Joy and Thankfulness, and their Mouths shall be filled with Hallelujahs and Songs of Praise ; and in this most delightful Employment shall they join with all the blessed Company of Heaven for ever and ever. That is the Perfection of all, that the Joys of Heaven shall never have an End. It is both a most *exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory* that is promised, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. *For ever shall we remain with the Lord*, 1 Thes. iv. 17. The eternal God will be the Portion of his People, and their Joys in Him shall never be lessened or abated through all Eternity. They shall be always blessing and praising Him, always satisfied and ravished with the Beholding of his Glories, and the Enjoyment of his Love ; always delighted with the most pleasant and agreeable Society of Angels and Saints : and never more shall dear Friends and Companions be separated from each other ; when once they are met in Heaven, Death hath no more Power over them. They are become, in some measure, even like to Christ himself, and there shall see Him as He is in all his Glory, *Phil. iii. 21. 1 John iii. 2.*

But what it is to be thus made like to Christ, to see God and enjoy Him, we are not able fully to express or conceive whilst we are here in the Body : To compare the Glories of Heaven to all the Riches and Honours of Courts and Palaces here below, were greatly to lessen and disparage them. So great are those heavenly Glories and Joys, that they can never

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be clearly known till they are enjoyed ; as a blind Man can never tell what Light is, till his Eyes are opened to discern it. It is enough for us that we have full Assurance from the Promises of the Gospel, that such a State of unspeakable Happiness is provided for good Men in the Life to come. And as the Lord Jesus is gone before to prepare it for them, so now by his Holy Spirit He prepares them for that blessed Place, by working in them that Grace which fits them for Glory, and is the first Fruit and Beginning of it in their Souls. True Holiness is the most certain Pledge of eternal Happiness, and makes us meet for it, *Eph. i. 13, 14. Col. i. 12.*

Since then such a Glory there is, so infinitely great, so sure and certain, shall we not all be persuaded to seek after it, by walking in those holy Ways that lead thereto? Surely we shall, if we have any Belief of God's Word, or any Regard to our own Interest. Must our Souls live for ever in another World, and shall we not use our utmost Care and Diligence to make them happy for ever there? Are they not our own Souls, and do they not then deserve our Love and Care? *If we be Wise and Good, is it not for ourselves,* for our own Happiness? And is there any other Way to make ourselves happy, but by gaining the Love of God and eternal Life? Do we not see that all worldly Comforts are short and uncertain? They wither in our Hands, and perish in the using. Our Neighbours and Acquaintance are daily dying round about us; many of our dearest Friends and Relations are already gone before us; and we ourselves are swiftly following after. We are just upon the Borders of Eternity, liable to a thousand Diseases and Mischances that may soon stop our Breath, and then we are gone. Since then we cannot make sure of

this Life, and the Enjoyments of it, O let us seek to make sure of eternal Glory; which even the poorest Man on Earth may do by God's Assistance, if he will become sincerely pious and good, for God is no Respector of Persons. Christ died for poor Men as well as rich; and they that have no Inheritance on Earth, may be Heirs of the heavenly Kingdom, if they be rich in Faith and Love to God, *James ii. 5.* And methinks they that have so much Trouble and Sorrow in this Life, should be moved to seek after Riches and Glory in the Life to come. There the poorest *Lazarus* shall have a thousand Times more Pleasure and Joy, than any proud rich Gluttons, or Epicures, have now in their delicious Fare and gorgeous Apparel. Nay, the very Hopes of this Glory may fill the good Man's Mind with so much Joy, that he will often forget his Poverty, and not count his Afflictions worthy to be compared with the Happiness he hopes for; nor would he change Estates with the greatest Prince upon Earth, who is a Stranger to these Hopes. Thus it was with the holy Apostles and their Followers, *2 Cor. vi. 10. 1 Peter i. 6, 7, 8.*

Thus have I briefly told you somewhat of the Happiness of the Godly in the World to come; but, on the other hand, consider what will be the Portion of the Wicked, who despise the Mercies of God, and the Offers and Promises of the Gospel. These will at last fall under his heavy Wrath and Vengeance, and there must remain for ever in the most intolerable Torment of Soul and Body, set out by the most dreadful Things, such as Fire and Brimstone, and a never-dying Worm that perpetually gnaws and stings their Hearts. They are cast into outer Darknes; where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth, not the least glim-
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mering of Hope or Comfort to all Eternity, *Matt.* xxv. 30, 41, 46. Chap. ix. 43. to the End; 2 *Thess.* i. 7, 8, 9. These are the Goats that, being set on the left Hand, must hear that doleful Sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* An heavy Doom, and yet most just. For they departed from God, and neglected his Service here on Earth, and therefore now they must depart from his Presence, in which their corrupt Minds can take no Delight. They preferred the Tavern and the Ale-house before the House of God; and took more Pleasure in feasting and drinking, in roaring and revelling amongst their wicked Companions, than in worshipping God in the Communion of Saints; they loved not Prayers and Praises in the Assemblies of his People, nor had any Mind to come to the Lord's Table, though often invited thereto; and therefore they must now be shut out from such holy Company, and from such high and heavenly Employments, for which they are altogether unfit. They were many of them greatly given to Cursing, and now it is come upon them; that Curse of God, which they in their Rage often wished to their Neighbours, is now fallen upon themselves. Nay, did not many of these profane Wretches in hellish Language even call for this Curse upon their own Heads? And what Wonder if their Petition be now granted, and they sentenced to that Damnation which they thus called for? By the Devil they were led and guided, and by his wicked Instruments and their own brutish Lusts. And therefore now they must have the Devil and his Angels, and damned Sinners like themselves, to be their Companions in Torments, who are so far from pitying or comforting each other, that rather they curse one another now in their Misery, who before tempted one

another to Sin. O sad Meeting of the Drunkards, the Whoremongers, and the Harlots, there together in those scorching Flames; where in vain they cry out for a Drop of Water to cool their Tongue. It must not be granted them: Their good things are all past and gone, and the Remembrance of all their Riot and Lewdness serves but to increase their Torment. And now also may they remember how God did again and again call upon them, and they would not hear; neither therefore will he now hear their Cries, when Pain and Anguish is come upon them, *Prov. i. 24.* to the End. And though they may cry out against their Companions, and accuse the Devil, and in their Rage blaspheme God himself; yet will their Consciences fly with the greatest Fury upon themselves, who, in spite of all the Warnings that were given them, did, by their own wilful and impenitent Continuance in Sin, plunge themselves into this Misery, from whence they must never be released. O dreadful Words, *Everlasting Fire! Eternal Torment!* How do the Thoughts of this sink and break their Hearts, and fill them with the deepest Horror and Despair? *Who can dwell with everlasting Burnings? Who can!* And yet the damned Sinner must, though in the most raging and impatient Manner. After they have lain Thousands and Millions of Years in that Place of Torment, yet is there not a Moment less to come, there is a whole Eternity still behind. The Worm never dies, the Flame is never quenched. Nor is God to be accused of Severity in all this, since it was the Sinners own doing, the Fruit of their own Choice: For they knew that Sin would sink them into Hell, and yet they would venture upon it. And indeed it sinks them thither as naturally as a Stone falls to the Ground. Even here on Earth, the proud and covetous, the malicious and revengeful,

ful, the profane and sensual, do kindle somewhat of Hell in their own Breasts : And whilst they carry along with them the same wicked Temper of Mind, it must still needs make them most wretched and miserable in another World, as long as ever their Souls live, and these Vices stick to them, that is, to all Eternity. Let not him that carries Fire in his Bosom accuse God's Providence for making the Fire hot when he feels it burn him ; but let him blame his own Folly and Wilfulness ; and so must self-condemned Sinners be forced to do.

And now tell me, I beseech you, is there not all the Reason in the World that you should speedily repent you of your Sins, and cast them from you with Loathing and Detestation, and henceforward enter upon a Course of serious Holiness, that so you may escape all this Misery threatened to the Wicked, and may partake of that Glory which is promised to the Pious and Good ? Does not a Thousand Pounds a Year deserve the Labour of one Day ? And will not all the Joys of Heaven, that shall last for ever and ever, abundantly reward our Diligence in God's Service for all this short Life ? And are not the eternal Torments of Hell enough to restrain Men from a loose and sinful Life, though it were ever so profitable and pleasant here for a little while ? But you have before heard it fully proved, that even at present an holy Life is in all respects most for our Benefit and Comfort. So that without doubt a good Man finds more Sweetness and Satisfaction in the Way to Heaven, than Sinners do in the Way to Hell. Our gracious God appoints us an easy and honourable Service, and gives glorious Rewards ; but the Devil is a most cruel Master, and sets his Slaves to the vilest Drudgery, and afterwards pays them

them very sad Wages, *Rom. vi. 21, 22, 23.* Will you then be Christ's Freemen, or the Devil's Bond-slaves? Will you walk in the good Ways of God, that bring Peace and Comfort here on Earth, and eternal Glory in Heaven; or in the crooked Paths of Sin, which now bring Sorrow, and Shame, and Pain, and hereafter will plunge you into eternal Misery and Torment in Hell? Thus are Life and Death, Happiness and Misery, set before you, what Choice then will you make? One would think there was no great Difficulty in this Case, to a Man that has the Use of his Reason, if he will at all make Use of it in the Affairs of his Soul. A little thinking serves to convince Men that there is no Reason why they should choose Poverty and Reproach, Pain and Imprisonment (if they can honestly avoid them) rather than Riches or Honour, Ease and Liberty. But I am sure there is a thousand Times less Reason for a Man to disobey God, and damn his Soul for ever, rather than to please and serve Him, and so make sure of eternal Salvation. Therefore, let me again beseech you to take the Matter into Consideration, and think seriously what is most reasonable, and most for your own Interest, and then choose accordingly. And I pray God direct your Hearts to make so wise a Choice, that you may never have Cause to repent of it either in this World, or that to come. *Amen.*



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C H A P. II.

A brief Description of an holy Life, with some short Directions in order thereto.

IF you now demand of me wherein consists this Holiness of Life, to which I have been thus long and earnestly exhorting you, I hope you may in some measure understand it by reflecting on what I said at the Beginning, and by attending to what I have intimated all along in my Discourse. Yet for your Assistance, I shall somewhat more plainly represent it to you, though very briefly; as no more can be expected in this little Treatise.

In the general then (as I have before expressed it) I am only persuading you to live as becomes true Christians, according to your Baptismal Vow, in keeping of which consists your Christianity. Now by your Baptism you are engaged to believe in, and obey God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; you must sincerely and heartily own God the Father as your Maker and Preserver, the Son of God as your Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter. And accordingly must you behave yourselves both in Heart and Life; and therefore you must renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, which would draw you off from God, and must stedfastly believe the Articles of the Christian Faith, and carefully keep God's holy Will and Commandments all the Days of your Life. Your Faith is required in order to Obedience; for if you do not believe Christ's Gospel, you are not like to obey it. In these two
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Things then consists the Religion of a Christian, to which he is engaged by his Baptism, namely, in believing what Jesus Christ hath revealed, and in doing what He hath commanded. In short, he is a good Christian, who doth firmly believe his Creed, and carefully keeps the Commandments.

The Doctrines, which we are to believe, are indeed more largely and fully delivered in the holy Scriptures, which were written by Men inspired by the Holy Ghost; and accordingly ought to be received as the Word of God, and to be diligently read, and stedfastly believed. But the chief Articles of the Christian Faith are briefly summed up in that which we call the Apostles Creed, *I believe in God the Father, &c.* This I hope you are well acquainted with, it being so short and plain, and daily repeated in the Church Service; and therefore I shall not set it down at large. And this also I hope you do believe to be most true. You would take it ill, if I should question your Belief of the Creed, without which you are not to be reckoned as Christians. But let me advise you to consider seriously and frequently of those great Truths contained in the Creed, that you may more clearly understand them, and be more affected with them. And pray see that your Belief of them be very firm and deeply rooted in your Soul, that so the Fruit of your Faith may appear in the Holiness of your Life. Without this, the bare knowing of the Creed, and repeating it ever so often, will stand us in no stead. For as I told you, Obedience is the End of Faith. And all the Articles of our Belief do most plainly tend to make us Holy and Good, if we will but carefully attend to them, and consider them well. To prove this in a few Words, *If we believe that God the Father Almighty made us and all the World,* then

are we bound to love and honour Him, to worship and obey Him as our Maker and Preserver, who is almighty in Power, infinite in Wisdom, Goodness, and all Manner of Perfections. If we believe that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Redeemer of Mankind, who died for us, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven, and will thence come to judge the Quick and the Dead, and will grant to all penitent and obedient Believers the Forgiveness of their Sins, and everlasting Life, but will sentence the Wicked to everlasting Misery; our Belief of this must lead us to true Repentance and Amendment of Life, and to an humble Dependence on the Mercies of God and the Merits of Christ for Pardon and Salvation. And if we believe, That it is the Office of the Holy Ghost to sanctify us and all the elect People of God; then ought we to pray to God for his Holy Spirit, and we must comply with his good Motions, and submit to his working upon our Souls, that He may sanctify us and make us holy, that so we may be living Members of Christ's holy Catholic Church. And in this Church we are bound to continue, that so in the Communion of Saints we may enjoy the Benefit of the Word, Sacraments and Prayer, by which Means the Holy Ghost works Grace in us, and increases the same till it be perfected in eternal Glory, to which good Men shall be advanced both in Soul and Body at the Resurrection, as their Souls make entrance upon it presently after their Death.*

Thus we see how a right Belief leads a Man to Holiness of Life. And therefore in holy Scripture so we find so much Mention made of Faith, or believing in God and in Christ. This in many Places is highly extolled, and most strictly required of us, as the very Sum of our Duty; insomuch that

that we are often said to be justified, or pardoned on Account of our Faith, and to be saved by Faith; and all this chiefly, as I suppose, because true Faith produces Obedience, and makes a Man become an humble and sincere Disciple of Jesus Christ, and so makes us fit for the Mercies of God, in and through our blessed Saviour. But when Faith doth not bring forth the Fruit of Holiness and good Works, it is of no Value with God, nor will stand us in any stead, as you may see at large in the second Chapter of *St. James*, to name no other Places. Wherefore you know we are engaged in our Baptism, not only to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, but also to keep God's Commandments; which I am to speak of next.

Now these Commandments are also plainly contained in the holy Scriptures; and therefore there is still more Reason why you should diligently read and study the same, that you may know the Will of God and do it. And all that is to be done by us, I reckon, is contained in the Ten Commandments, as they are explained to us, and urged upon us both by the Prophets in the Old Testament, and by our Saviour and his Apostles in the New; especially in our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh Chapters of *St. Matthew's Gospel*. Therefore often read over these three Chapters, in which you will find what Manner of Persons the Disciples of Jesus ought to be, even like their Master, of an humble lowly Spirit, meek and gentle, pure and peaceable, merciful, patient, and the like. Such as these he pronounces blessed, in the Beginning of that heavenly Sermon, and these alone are they whom He will make most blessed with himself for ever. But if you will have the Sum of your Duty to God and your Neighbour

as required by the Ten Commandments, briefly represented; take it in the very Words of the Church Catechism.

“ My Duty towards God, is to believe in Him ;
“ to fear Him ; to love Him with all my Heart,
“ with all my Mind, with all my Soul, and with
“ all my Strength ; to worship Him, and to give
“ Him Thanks ; to put my whole Trust in Him ; to
“ call upon Him ; to honour his holy Name and his
“ Word ; and to serve Him truly all the Days of
“ my Life.

“ My Duty towards my Neighbour, is to love
“ him as myself, and to do unto all Men as I would
“ they should do unto me. To love, honour and
“ succour my Father and Mother. To honour and
“ obey the King, and all that are put in Authority
“ under him. To submit myself to all my Gover-
“ nors, Teachers, spiritual Pastors and Masters. To
“ order myself lowly and reverently to all my Bet-
“ ters. To hurt nobody by Word or Deed. To be
“ true and just in all my Dealings. To bear no Ma-
“ lice nor Hatred in my Heart. To keep my Hands
“ from Picking and Stealing, my Tongue from
“ Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering. To keep
“ my Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chas-
“ tity. Not to covet nor desire other Mens Goods,
“ but to learn and labour truly to get my own Liv-
“ ing, and to do my Duty in that State of Life
“ unto which it shall please God to call me.”

Here you have your Duty in a small Compass,
which you may easily keep in Memory ; but espe-
cially beg of God to write his Laws in your Heart,
that you may freely and chearfully obey them in
your Life and Conversation. And for your fur-
ther Assistance, I shall a little enlarge upon the chief
of these Duties, especially the Love of God and
your Neighbour, and so conclude with some short
and

and general Directions, for the guiding of your Steps more readily and constantly in the Ways of Holiness all the Days of your Life.

To love God with all our Heart and Soul, is the first and great Commandment, as our Saviour himself teacheth us, *Matt. xxii. 37, 38.* This makes us more easily obey all the rest of his Commands. For if we truly love God, we shall be very fearful to offend Him, and very careful to please Him in all our Ways. And then do we truly love God with all our Heart, when we love Him more than all other Things in the World, more than Riches, Pleasures, Honours, Friends, or any other Enjoyments; yea, more than our very Lives: So that we will part with all, rather than lose the Favour of God, in which we account our Happiness chiefly to consist. This I take to be the very Essence of Religion, and it is that without which, our Saviour tells us, we cannot be his Disciples, *Matt. x. 37, 38.* But when once we are got to this blessed Temper, we shall find it no very hard Matter to deny ourselves, and to take up our Cross, and follow our Lord and Master, both in well doing and in patient suffering.

Wherefore let us earnestly beg of God by his Holy Spirit to work this Love in our Hearts. And to our Prayers let us add our own diligent Endeavours; and especially, let us seriously meditate upon the Goodness and Loving-Kindness of God manifested to us, and to all the World. Let us consider what He hath done for us already, both for Soul and Body, and what He has promised to do in the Life to come. And never let our Hearts be at rest, till they are entirely fixed upon the ever-blessed God as our chiefest Good, and only satisfying Portion. And let us earnestly seek his Favour, through our Lord Jesus, the Mediator who came into the World on purpose to bring

us into a State of Friendship with God, that we might love Him, and be loved by Him, and live with Him for ever in Love and Joy. But always remember that Obedience to God is the only sure Evidence of true saving Love. He that loves God, will hate and abhor Sin and Wickedness. Let the Son pretend what Love and Honour he will to his Father, he does not truly love him, except he uses all due Care to please him.

And if you thus sincerely love God as your Father, then you may always comfortably trust in Him, and depend upon Him; which is another great Duty, and brings great Peace and Quiet to our Minds, *Isa. xxvi. 3, 4.* Whilst you live in Obedience to God's Command, you have a sure Interest in his Promises, and may safely rely upon his good Providence for the Performance of them. Wherefore, whatever your Wants, your Dangers, or Sufferings are, do not distrust the Providence of God, but wait patiently and do your own Duty, and be assured God in his good Time will succour and relieve you: He will direct, comfort and strengthen you. Let all the Experience you have hitherto had of his Loving-kindness, engage you to trust in Him as long as you live. And take great Care that you never murmur nor repine against God under any Affliction whatever; when you meet with the heaviest Crosses or Disappointments, or lose your dearest Relations and Friends, say with holy *Job, The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* Beseech God to teach you that excellent Lesson of Contentment in all Estates, *Phil. iv. 11, 12, 13.* Though you may be low and poor in this World, yet, consider, you have always Cause to be thankful, but never any Reason to complain. God knows what Condition is best for us, and let us

leave it to Him to choose what we shall have. We that deserve nothing but Wrath and Misery, ought to acknowledge the great Goodness of God, that we are on this Side Hell. *It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not utterly consumed,* and that we do enjoy any Measure of Comfort. Think how poor the Lord Jesus was for our Sakes, who had not where to lay his Head, and whose Wants were supplied by the Substance of others; and in the same mean Condition did the holy Apostles live. Your low Circumstances free you from a great many Snares and Temptations, and from a great many Cares and Sorrows that rich People meet with. If you but truly love God, and have a Treasure in Heaven, you are very rich, though you have neither Gold nor Silver. Fear not, but God will give you and yours Food and Raiment; and having that, be content and thankful. Yea, let us suppose the very worst, that you should starve to Death for Want of Bread, (which not one in a Thousand does in Times of Peace and Plenty) yet if your Souls be fit for Heaven, and carried thither, ye shall have no Cause to complain of the Manner of your Death. I have been a little the larger upon this for the sake of poor People, who are apt to be discontented, and to murmur at their Condition; though, alas! they commonly bring themselves into it, or make it much worse, by their own careless and loose Lives, as was before-mentioned.

And yet, before I proceed to the Duty you owe to your Neighbour, let me in a few Words direct you, as to the Worship of God in Prayers and Praises. This is a Duty most frequently enjoined in Scripture, and practised by all good Men, and the very Light of Nature may direct us to it. We have daily need of God's Mercy, and do daily stand in need of it, and therefore we are taught to *pray continually*.

ally, and in every Thing to give Thanks. To God alone must we offer up our Prayers and Praises in the Name of Jesus Christ, as He himself teaches us, *Matt. iv. 10. John xvi. 23.* We must not pray to Angels or Saints, nor make use of them as our Mediators, for this is the peculiar Office of Christ, who died for us, and is now interceding at the right Hand of God, *1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. vii. 25.* Wherefore we, mean sinful Creatures, must always come to God in the Name of Christ, and for his Sake alone hope for the Favour of God, the Pardon of our Sins, the Acceptance of our Persons and Services, and the Salvation of our Souls.

And our Saviour teacheth us to worship God in a pure and spiritual Manner, with our Hearts and Souls; because He is a Spirit, and searches the Hearts of Men, *John iv. 24.* Wherefore by no means may we make any Image or Picture of God, nor may we give religious Worship to an Image, which is directly contrary to the second Commandment. Neither may we frame in our Minds any bodily Shape or Likeness of God, when we pray to Him, but must conceive of Him as a most pure and glorious Spirit, most powerful, and wise, and good; who fills the whole World with his Presence, and is always near to us, though not to be seen with bodily Eyes; and hears our Prayers, and knows our Wants, and is both able and willing to help us.

Our Saviour hath commanded us to pray to God in private, *Matt. vi. 6.* and has taught his Disciples how to pray, giving them that most excellent Form, which we call the Lord's Prayer, *Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.* which, by the way, may assure us, that Forms of Prayer are very lawful, and the Lord's Prayer may both serve for a Pattern to direct us in all our

Prayers, and also is itself most fit to be used and joined to our other Prayers. But it is not proper to use the Belief and Ten Commandments for Prayers, as the Manner is of poor ignorant People; though we ought often to think of them, and rehearse them, for the quickening of our Faith, and the guiding of our Lives.

Upon all Occasions, in all our Troubles and Distresses, let us be much in Prayer to God, and still seek to Him for Mercy and Comfort, who is always nigh to them that call upon Him in Truth and Sincerity. Would the poor Man seek as earnestly to God for Relief, as he does to his rich Neighbour, he would find it the surest Course to have his Wants supplied. And let us all frequently be lifting up our Hearts to God in Thanksgiving and Praise, for all his Mercies and Favours which he bestows upon us. Thus may even the poorest Man have his Mind often employed when he is at work in the Shop, or in the Field, when he is walking in the Way, or sailing on the Seas; which would not hinder, but further his Labours, and make them more easy and pleasant. But be sure to set some Time apart every Day for solemn Prayer.

Very fit it is to begin the Day with Prayer to God, as soon as we rise out of Bed; blessing his Name for our Preservation and quiet Rest, begging his gracious Presence with us all the Day, that we may be kept from all Evil, especially from Sin, the worst of all. And at the Evening let this be our last Work before we lie down to sleep, humbly to commit ourselves to God by Prayer, *Psal.* xcii. 1, 2.

Exceeding useful it is for those who have Families, to join together Morning and Evening Prayer to God, and in reading some Part of his holy

Words

Word, for which Purpose there are many good Books of Devotion; and if they have none of them, they may use such of the Prayers of the Church as are proper for their Purpose, which are to be found in the Morning and Evening Service, and in other Places.

Before you sit down to Meat, beg God's Blessing upon it, and afterwards return Thanks for it.

But besides our Devotion in the Family or Closet, our great Duty is to worship God in the public Assemblies of his People, which by no Means we ought to forsake, *Heb. x. 25*. Suffer not yourselves therefore, by any Pretence whatever, to be drawn away, either by Papists or Sectaries, from the public Worship of God, as it is now by Law established in the Church of *England*. But see that you duly resort to your Parish Churches, and that not only on Holidays, but on the Week Days, when you have Opportunity and Leisure. More especially see that you constantly frequent the Church on the Lord's Day, if not hindered by Sicknefs, or some other very great and urgent Cause. Let not that Excuse keep you from Church, which would not keep you from the Market. Bring as many of your Family along with you as can possibly be spared. Come at the very Beginning of the Service, and stay quietly to the End of it, not running away before the Blessing, as many careless People rudely do, as if they were glad to get away as from a Prison. Behave yourselves with all due Reverence, both of Body and Mind, considering the Majesty of that God, in whose Presence you stand, before whom the very Angels veil their Faces. Always kneel at your Prayer, if there be Convenience, or stand at least, *Pf. xcv. 6*. Above all, look well to the Temper of your Soul, and keep up an awful Sense of the

the great God to whom you are praying, and mind well what is said, as you go along with the Prayers, and offer up your Desires to God : Otherwise, though you may speak much, you do not pray at all. Avoid all vain and wandering Thoughts, as much as possible. When you join in the Confession of Sins, think of your own particular Faults, and be deeply humbled for them : And be unfeignedly thankful for all God's Mercies, whilst you are praising his Name ; and earnestly long after that Grace you pray for. Attend with Care and Reverence to God's Word, when it is read from the Desk, and also to the preaching and explaining it from the Pulpit, that you may be both diligent Hearers, and faithful Doers of the Word. Neglect not the Church in the Afternoon, though you should live where there is no Sermon. Catechising may be as useful to you, and this ought to be in all Places. And besides that, you will hear the holy Scriptures read, and have the Benefit of public Prayers.

When you come from Church, spend not the Remainder of the Day in Sports and Idleness, much less in Drinking and Gaming, as too many do ; but if you have a Family, let some Time be spent with them, in praying, in reading God's Word, and some good Book ; and let Children and Servants be instructed in their Catechism. Examine them about what they have heard, that so it may make them more attentive ; and do you meditate on the same, that it may sink into your Heart. Works of Mercy and Necessity may be done on the Lord's Day ; but by no Means allow yourselves in any needless Labour, not in travelling upon the Road, or wandering about to make idle Visits. God allows us six Days in the Week for our own

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Employments, let us devote the Lord's Day to his Service readily and chearfully.

When the Sacrament of Baptism is administred, do you attend to it. Remember your own Engagement by having received it in your Infancy, and resolve to live answerably thereto. Join in Prayer for God's Blessing on the Children then received into the Church. And when you bring your own Children to be baptized, see that you do most sincerely give them up to God, and devote them to his Service, with firm Resolution to bring them up in his Fear, if God spare your Life and theirs, and earnestly pray for his Grace to be given into their Souls. And as for those to whom you stand as Sureties, you ought to do your utmost towards their good Education in the Knowledge of God and Religion, according to the Charge given you, especially if the Parents die, or prove negligent. And pray beware of a very wicked Practice, which is common in some Places, that after a Child is baptized, the Neighbours that are invited spend the rest of the Day in Riot and Drunkenness, forgetting that even now they renounced the Lusts of the Flesh: Those who stood at the Font, and all the rest, are under the same Obligation.

Whenever you are invited by your Minister to the holy Communion, do not perversely neglect the Invitation; but come with a thankful Heart to keep up the Remembrance of Christ's Love in dying for Sinners, according to his express Command, *Luke xxii. 19.* Take Care to prepare yourselves by true Repentance for all your former Sins, and stedfast Purposes, by God's Grace, thoroughly to forsake the same. See that you be in perfect Charity with all Men, freely forgiving those who have offended you, and offering Satisfaction to those whom you have

have offended. If after this they will not be reconciled, that is not your Fault, but theirs; and therefore may not keep you from the Sacrament. Stay not away out of Pretence that you want Time to prepare yourself. For a constant holy Life is the best Preparation. If you are fit for Prayers, you are fit for the Communion. Do not think that the Communion is only for rich People. The Souls of the Poor are as precious as those of the Rich, and as much concerned in Christ's Death, and they have as much Cause to remember it, and seek after the Benefits of it. If you have not Money to offer at the Collection, see that you offer up yourselves to God, and that will be of more Value. Complain not that you want Clothes, and therefore you absent both from the Church and Communion; but see that you come in the Wedding-Garment required in the Gospel, with humble, penitent, thankful Hearts; and then you will be welcome Guests at Christ's Table. For your Direction, if you have no Books on this Subject, yet read seriously the Office for the Communion in the Common-Prayer, and you may find very great Assistance from it. It is very fit also to consult with your Minister, especially the first Time you receive. Assure yourselves, it is a very heinous Sin to live one Year after another in the Neglect of this weighty Duty, and argues a very great Contempt of our Saviour's Authority, and of his infinite Love and Kindness.

Before I leave speaking of your Duty to God, let me beseech you carefully to abstain from that common heinous Sin of Swearing. A most senseless Piece of Wickedness, that brings neither Pleasure nor Profit along with it. When you are called before the Magistrate in weighty Cases, you may lawfully swear, *Heb. vi. 16.* But take great Care to swear

swear the Truth, and nothing but the Truth; for otherwise you call the true God to witness a Lye, and do even call for his Vengeance upon yourselves. In your ordinary Communication avoid all Manner of Swearing, either by the sacred Name of God, or by any Creature, *Matt. v. 34. James v. 12.* Use not such Expressions, *As you hope to be saved, as you hope for Mercy,* with other the like, which are great Oaths, though frequently used upon every slight Occasion. Do not so much as rashly and carelessly mention the holy Name of God or Christ; but let your inward Reverence be manifested in your outward Expressions.

And to this I may fitly join an earnest Caution against the Sin of Cursing, in which the Name of God is often dishonoured; when Men wish that God's Curse may light upon others, sometimes their very Children and nearest Relations, sometimes on their Neighbours, and sometimes on their Cattle. Some profane Wretches wish Damnation to those they quarrel with; yea, even to themselves. And how common is it to hear Men in their Wrath wish the Pox, or Plague, or Hanging to their Neighbours, or bidding the Devil take them! Indeed they themselves seem to be possessed by him, whilst they vent this Language of Hell; and do take the ready Way to bring all Manner of Curses both on their own Souls and Bodies, *Psalms cix. 17, 18.* This wicked Custom proceeds both from the Want of the true Fear of God in Men's Hearts, and also from the Want of Kindness and Charity to one another; of which I am next to speak a few Words.

Next to the loving God above all, the loving of our Neighbours as ourselves, is the great Duty of a Christian, as our Saviour teaches us in the same Place, *Matt. xxii. 39, 40.* And *Love is said to be the*

fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. Nothing more becomes a Disciple of Jesus Christ, than to live in Love and Charity with Men, doing all the Good we can to others, but doing no manner of Evil to any. Read 1 Cor. xiii. This is most frequently and strictly commanded in the Gospel, and makes the very Badge and Character of a Christian, *John* xiii. 34, 35. This makes us most like our blessed Lord and Master, *who went about continually doing Good*, both to the Souls and Bodies of Men; even to the very worst of Men, and to his most bitter Enemies, did He shew great Charity and Kindness. And herein let us study to be like Him; to the utmost of our Power.

If we have true Love for all Men, we shall then easily and readily perform all those Duties which we owe to them in the several Places and Relations wherein we stand, of which I must not here go about to give a particular Account. But in general, Husbands and Wives ought most entirely to love each other, and study to render one another's Lives happy here, and their Souls hereafter. For if they live in Discord and Wrath, they have a Hell upon Earth whilst they live, and have Reason to expect the eternal Torments of Hell when they die. Parents ought to love their Children, and take due Care of them, both as to Soul and Body; and Children ought to honour and obey their Parents, and relieve them if they stand in need. Masters must be gentle and kind towards their Servants; and Servants must be faithful and obedient to their Masters, even to the froward and severe. Subjects must yield Obedience to all the lawful Commands of their Rulers, and patiently submit to what Punishments they inflict; and upon no Pretence whatever may they rebel against them, for it is most expressly forbidden

bidden in Scripture, and Damnation threatened to those that are guilty, *Rom. xiii. 1, 2.* And commonly Treason and Rebellion bring nothing but Ruin and Misery in this World as well as the next. The People ought to esteem and love their Ministers, to follow their godly Admonitions and Examples, and afford them due Maintenance.

In brief, we must carefully abstain from doing any Injury to any Man, of what Rank or Condition soever, either in his Soul or Body, his Estate or good Name; but must ever be ready to do all manner of Good to all Men according to our Ability and Opportunity. And hereby we are to shew, that we love our Neighbours as ourselves, by dealing with all Men so truly and justly, so mercifully and kindly, as we desire to be dealt with ourselves. This is the great Rule of the Gospel, *Matt. vii. 12.* And by this Rule ought we to govern ourselves in all our Carriage towards others, both in buying and selling, and in our whole Conversation. This is a very plain and easy Rule to walk by, and is most just and equal, and very large and comprehensive; so that if a Man will honestly and faithfully attend to it, he need not go far to seek for Direction how to behave himself in most Cases that may happen betwixt him and his Neighbour. Would I be reviled and slandered, cheated and cozened, beaten and hurt, or any other Way abused? If not, then let me not use any other at this Rate. Would I be derided or despised for my Faults, or for my Poverty and Misfortunes? Would I not rather in Reason desire to be kindly instructed, assisted and relieved? Thus then let me deal with my Neighbour, and according to my Power, with Meekness and true Kindness instruct the Ignorant, reclaim the Vicious and Erroneous, comfort the Sad, and relieve the Oppressed, feed

the Hungry, and cloathe the Naked. Even those that are of a mean Condition, must be ready to help such as are in greater Want than themselves. The Man that lives by his Labour is not wholly excused from Works of Charity, *Eph. iv. 28.* The Widow's Mite is very acceptable to God; and a Cup of cold Water shall not lose its Reward. A willing charitable Mind it is that God chiefly looks at, and calls for; and this the poorest may have, if it be not their own Fault.

And our Charity and Kindness is not only to be shewn to our Friends, but to our very Enemies themselves. We may not render Evil for Evil, but must study to overcome Evil by doing Good. If another strike us, we may not strike again; if he rail at us, and revile us, we must not return the same ill Language; but either by Silence, or by gentle and soft Answers, endeavour to appease his Wrath. For the Rule is, not to deal with others as they deal with me, but as I in Reason desire to be dealt with, and another Man's Fault will not excuse mine. If he does me an Injury, I must not be Judge in my own Case, nor take upon me to revenge it; but in weighty Cases may fly to a Magistrate for Relief. But upon no Account whatever may we bear any Grudge or Hatred in our Hearts against any Man, though ever so wicked, or ever so much our Enemy; but we must pity him, and pray for him, that God will give him a better Mind. If ever we hope to find Mercy with God, and have our Trespases forgiven, we must forgive those that offend us, as we learn from the Lord's Prayer, and many most plain Places of Scripture. See *Matt. v. 44, &c. Matt. xviii. 21* to the End. *Rom. xii. 14.* to the End. We must shew Meekness and Gentleness to all Men, and never willingly say or do any Thing to provoke

another

another to Anger; nor should we be easily provoked, but very easily appeased and reconciled. It is very sad to consider, what wretched and miserable Lives many of the poorer Sort lead by their continual Brawling and Scolding, Quarrelling and Contending with one another; and sometimes when they have scarce Money to buy Bread, they will throw it away in vexatious Law-suits, merely out of Spite and Revenge.

And the People of this Rank ought especially to beware of envying those that are in a better Condition than themselves. We ought to have that true Kindness and Good-will for all Men, that we should be glad of their Prosperity, though we ourselves be in Affliction: As on the other Hand, we ought to have great Compassion on those in Misery, though we be in Prosperity.

And let such as are in Want, take Heed that their Necessities put them upon no unlawful Course for their Relief. Particularly beware of stealing any Thing, though of a small Value. By Degrees it is to be feared you will go on to greater Matters, and so may bring yourselves to Shame and Punishment in this World, as well as that to come. The best Way to avoid this, is to be very diligent in your lawful Calling, as the Apostle directs in that Place before-named, *Eph. iv. 28*. If you are not able to work, it is lawful to beg. But by no means betake yourselves to this lazy unprofitable Life of Begging, if you are able to subsist by any other lawful Course. He that will not work when he can, deserves not to eat. But rather than either steal or starve, you may seek for Relief from your Neighbour's Charity. But do not go about to deceive him, by borrowing what you know you are never likely to pay; for this is downright cheating. Rather deal plainly, and make known your

Necessities. If you trust in God, and do your Duty, He will take Care of you: And though you may be in Straits sometimes, yet still you will find a Supply. And to prevent your Poverty, let me especially warn you against that common brutish Sin of Drunkenness, which brings both this and many other Mischiefs along with it, as I have before told you. Indeed it hinders every Thing that is good, and leads Men into all manner of Sin and Misery. This Vice makes more Beggars than any other Cause. Wherefore if you have any Regard to your Families, and Love to Soul and Body, avoid all Riot and Excess. Eat and drink so moderately, as may tend to keep you best in Health, and make you most fit for the Service of God and your own Calling.

And lastly, Beware of that filthy Sin of Whoredom, which very often goes along with Drunkenness, and as often brings the Curse of God both upon Men's Bodies and Estates. And to keep you innocent, avoid Idleness as well as Intemperance: And fly from all lewd and wicked Company, where you are in Danger of being enticed and ensnared; and do not so much as allow yourselves in any unclean Thoughts or Desires, nor in filthy Discourses, or in any wanton Carriage and Behaviour. For the preventing of all Wickedness of this Kind, God hath allowed Marriage, which is said to be honourable in all, *but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, Heb. xiii. 4. Wherefore, let them who are in that State keep strictly true to their Marriage Vow; and all, both married and single, preserve both Body and Soul so chaste and pure, that the Holy Spirit of God may now dwell in their Hearts, and they be fit to dwell for ever in the Presence of the most Holy God.

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And thus I have briefly given you an Account wherein consists that Holiness of Life, to which all Christians are obliged by the Precepts of our blessed Saviour, and by their Baptismal Vow, which binds them to keep his Precepts, and to follow his Example, who himself lived in the same holy Manner that He taught, and hath commanded *those that say they abide in Him, to walk as He walked*, 1 John ii. 6. The Sum of all you have in few Words, which the Gospel teaches, even that we should *deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and piously in the World*, Tit. ii. 11, 12.

And now let me again beseech you seriously to consider, whether it has been your Care to live such holy and good Lives, or no. And whereinssoever your Conscience doth accuse you, that you have neglected the Duties God hath commanded, or committed those Sins which He hath forbidden, do you humbly acknowledge and confess the same to Almighty God, with true godly Sorrow for them, earnestly begging Mercy and Pardon for Christ's Sake, who died on the Cross for Sinners, and through whom all that confess and forsake their Sins shall find Mercy. Wherefore henceforth resolve by his Grace that you will forsake your Sins, and amend your Lives, and make it your chief Business to keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man, not allowing yourselves in any known Sin, nor in the wilful Neglect of any known Duty. Do not object against this, and say, that it is impossible to lead such an holy Life: For thousands in the World, of all Ranks and Conditions, have done it in all Ages, by the Assistance of God's Grace, which you shall never want, if you seek it earnestly, and improve it diligently. And though there may at first be some Difficulty in leaving an ill Course, yet by degrees

it will grow easy, and you will then find nothing so sweet and pleasant as Religion and Virtue.

And do not, I beseech you, fancy that it is not for poor People to think of being so religious and godly; that this is only for the Rich, who have little else to do. Why will not you that are poor have as much Care of your own Souls as the Rich, and study to be happy as well as they? By this Means you will be even with them, yea much happier than they, even in this Life, except they be good as well as great. What is there in all I have said, but even the poorest may perform, if they have but a willing Mind? May you not love God and your Neighbour, be sober and chaste, meek and humble, pray to God, and praise his Name? &c. Nay, is not this the much better Way to keep you from Poverty, or to help you out of it? Is it not much cheaper to live soberly and honestly, than to live in Drunkenness and Whoredom, and such like wasteful Sins? Does it not cost you much more to go to Law for Revenge, than to forgive an Injury? One Vice costs more maintaining than ten Virtues. And I am confident more Families are brought to Poverty by gratifying their Lusts, than by providing for their Children, how many soever they be. Is it not, think you, much better for yourselves and Families, to spend the Lord's Day in God's Service, both in public and private, than to waste your Time and Money in the Ale-house? Daily Experience shews, that it is not Religion, but the Want of it, that makes Men poor and miserable. Besides that, such good People have God's Blessing and Favour, as I have already shewed; and therefore He will be sure to take Care of them and theirs,

And pray do not think that you shall be saved merely because you are poor; for if you be wicked and ungodly, you will certainly be miserable in the

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next World as well as this. *Lazarus* was not saved because he was poor ; but because he was a pious poor Man : And on the other Hand, *Dives* was not damned for being rich, but because he was luxurious and proud, and wholly given up to pamper and adorn his Carcase.

Let me further warn you against two or three dangerous Mistakes, that harden many Men in their Sins. Beware of thinking that it is enough for a Man to be baptised and keep his Church, and go to Prayers and Sermons, and sometimes to the Communion; and say his Prayers in private : And that this is enough to prove him a good Christian, and make sure of Salvation. All this is very good, but this will not serve the Turn, except our Hearts be so thoroughly sanctified by the Grace of God, that we do so truly love God above all, and set our Hearts on the Joys of Heaven, and love our Neighbours, and be true and just in all our Dealings, temperate and chaste in our Conversation, as is before described. And this is the great End of Prayer, Sermons, and Sacraments, to make us more and more holy in Heart and Life, without which we shall be rather worse than better for them, *Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23.*

Be not so weak as to think you may be saved by a good Belief alone, by your Faith in Christ, and trusting in God, without Obedience to his Commands. It is for Christ's Sake only you are saved; but He will save none but those who obey Him, *Heb. x. 9.* And that is only true saving Faith, which purifies the Heart, and produces Obedience, as you have heard before. And since God has plainly told us, that we cannot be saved without Holiness; if we take up a foolish Confidence that we may be saved without it, this is not trusting in God, but our own Fancies and the Devil's Delusion. We may safely

safely trust in God's Promises; but then let us take care to perform the Conditions, and become such an humble holy People, as He has promised for Christ's Sake to own and save.

Take heed also of mistaking the Nature of Repentance, as if it were only being a little sorry for our Sins, and crying to God for Mercy, and that then all will be well, though we go on still in our own Ways. But this is a most dangerous Mistake: For a Man never truly repents till he forsakes his Sins, and changes his Course; till the Drunkard, for Instance, becomes sober, and the profane Man a devout Worshipper of God, and so continues. True Repentance changes the Heart and Life of a Sinner.

And lastly; Do not think it enough to forsake some Sins, and keep others; to do some Duties, and neglect others; and then excuse yourselves by saying it is your *Failing*; *every Man hath his Failing, and this is mine*. So say the Drunkard and the Whoremonger, and so says the angry Man when he swears or curses, or gives bad Language. But such Sins as are committed against Knowledge and Conscience, and continued from Time to Time, when we have Leisure to think before-hand, and prevent them, these are to be reckoned as wilful Sins, not as Failings. Especially such gross Sins as Drunkenness, Whoredom, common Swearing, or Lying, and the like, are not to be reckoned as Failings. Indeed whatever Sin a Man loves and pleads for, and allows himself in, is not a mere Infirmity, but a wilful Transgression. A good Man hates all Sin as he does Sickness, and strives, and watches, and prays against it. He hates every false Way, and has a Respect to all God's Commands. A true Christian must be an entirely good Man, all of a Piece. A great Matter I find it is with many People, that they do Wrong to nobody, nor

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have any Malice in their Hearts, and therefore they think themselves in good Condition God-ward. But though this is one good Part of our Duty, yet it is but a Part. We must also see that we do not wrong Almighty God and our own Souls, by setting our Hearts chiefly on this World, by neglecting his Worship and Service, by living in Excess and Uncleanliness, or any other known Sin. We must be both pious towards God, loyal to our Prince, just and charitable to our Neighbour, humble and sober, every way holy and good, if we will approve ourselves to be Christians indeed. He that wilfully offends in one Point, and allows himself therein, is guilty in effect of breaking the whole Law: For he despises God's Authority; and if he meets with the same Temptation, will commit any other Sin. And as is commonly and truly said in this Case, one Stab, though but with a Penknife, may wound a Man as mortally as twenty Thrusts with a Sword; so one Sin loved and delighted in, may damn a Man's Soul as well as a thousand, *James ii. 10.*

Having thus endeavoured briefly to remove your Objections and Mistakes, I do now again in the last Place come to enforce my Exhortation, that you would seriously and stedfastly resolve to cast away every Sin, and most entirely devote yourselves to the leading such a godly, righteous and sober Life, as you are bound to by your Christian Baptism. If you are in Dispute with yourselves whether you should resolve upon it, pray look over the Arguments before laid down, and ponder them in your Minds; and then certainly you cannot but own, that I persuade you to nothing but what is very just and reasonable, and every Way for your greatest Good: And if you are convinced of this, then proceed forthwith to this pious Resolution, without trifling or delaying. The sooner you do it, the
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safer it is, and the better for you. Do not go on in Sin at present, on a Pretence that you will repent hereafter, when you are older, or when you come to lie on a Sick or Death-bed. Do not put off the great Business of Life to the End of your Days, when you are not sure of Time or Strength, or of God's Assistance or Acceptance of you. Do not plead the Example of the Thief upon the Cross: For his Case was nothing like yours, that have long enjoyed the Offers of Grace and Mercy. If now from this present Time you will heartily and sincerely return to God, you have no Reason to despair of his Mercies, how many and great soever your Sins have been: But if you still persist in Sin, presuming upon God's Mercy hereafter, you have just Cause to fear, that this bold Presumption and horrid Abuse of God's Grace may end in your eternal Ruin and Damnation.

But if you are willing now speedily to enter upon this Resolution and Purpose, then let me in a few Words further direct you by what Means you may render it firm and lasting, and be best enabled to perform the same.

I. And first, I would advise you to take the next Opportunity to confirm this holy Resolution, at the Table of the Lord. There solemnly renew your baptismal Vow. Dedicate and give up yourself to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; renouncing the Devil, the World and the Flesh, and all those wicked Ways they would draw you to, more especially those Sins which you have been formerly most guilty of. Henceforth let the Lord Jesus, that bought you with his Blood, be taken for your only Lord and Master, to govern you by his Spirit, and by his Laws, as ever you desire or hope to be saved by his Death and Resurrection. And use frequently to think of this solemn Engagement, after you have

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made it; that it may have due Force upon you when you are tempted to revolt to any wicked Practice. Often repeat the same betwixt God and your own Soul: And especially renew it by frequent Attendance on the holy Communion, there seeking for Grace and Strength from God, to walk in his holy Ways stedfastly and constantly.

II. But that brings me to a second Direction: That you should not resolve upon all this in a Confidence of your own Strength, but in a most humble Dependence on the Grace of God, which He is ever willing to bestow on such as seek it earnestly in the Way He has appointed, by a due Attendance on the Means of Grace, the Word, Prayer, and Sacraments. Wherefore, as you have Opportunity, attend carefully to the reading and hearing of his Word, *and hide it in your Heart, that you may not sin against Him.* And be very much in Prayer to God for his Holy Spirit to be given you through his Son Jesus, who will powerfully intercede for you, and make good his Promises to humble and devout Supplicants, *Luke xi. 13. John xvi. 23, 24.* Whenever you are in Danger, and are assaulted by any Temptation to Sin, or are backward to what is good, then especially pray fervently for quickening and strengthening Grace, and your Prayers shall not be in vain.

III. To your Prayers add constant Watchfulness over yourselves at all Times, and in all Places and Companies. Watch over your Thoughts, your Words and Actions. Satan is ever watching to deceive us, and there are many Snares and Dangers in all our Ways, and we have corrupt Natures, and treacherous Hearts, and therefore had need to be very watchful, to avoid all Occasions of Sin, as much as possible, and to suppress the very first Beginnings. Think beforehand what Temptations
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you are like to meet with, and fortify yourself against what you cannot shun. Do not wilfully run into Danger; especially beware of bad Company, by which many are drawn back to their former evil Courses. Be not led away by their Counsel or Example, nor be discouraged by their Jeers and Censures. Use often to look back upon your Actions, and if you have been drawn into any wilful Sin, do not make a light Matter of it, nor yet despair of Pardon, if you be truly penitent. Wherefore speedily and earnestly betake yourself to God by true Repentance, begging Mercy for Christ's Sake, and more Grace to strengthen and assist you. Renew your Purposes for Amendment of Life, and set your Watch more strictly for the future.

IV. To quicken and engage you to this Watchfulness, remember that Almighty God is ever present with, and observes all your Ways, and takes great Delight in your Piety and Holiness, but is of purer Eyes than to behold the least Iniquity with any Pleasure. Wherefore, always walk as in the Presence of this Holy God, whether you are alone or in Company.

V. Think often how near you stand to another World, and what an Account you must give to God, of all your Deeds done in the Body; and so live now, as will be most for your Comfort at Death and Judgment. When the Profits and Pleasures of Sin entice you, compare them with the eternal Joys which they will deprive you of, and with the eternal Torments they lead to. Think whether ever any Man, by sinning against God, did gain somewhat that is better than Heaven, or that is worth going to Hell for. Let Eternity be very much in your Thoughts, and the fading Vanities of this World will have little Esteem with you. Often ponder these weighty Words of our blessed Saviour

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Saviour, *What will it profit a Man to gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Mark viii. 36. iii. 7.

Lastly, Instead of more Directions, let me advise you to acquaint yourself with your Minister, and consult him in the great Concernment of your Soul, as Men are wont to do the Lawyer and Physician, in Matters that concern their Bodies and Estates. Do not think it enough to hear his Sermon in public, but take Advice from him in private, and open to him the State and Case of your Soul, so far as may enable him to give such Directions as are most proper for your Condition. This especially you ought to do, when you first make Entrance upon an holy Life, and do first address yourselves to the holy Communion; or when you are under any great Doubts and Trouble of Mind, and are vexed with sore Temptations either of one Sort or other: or when you are set upon by such as would draw you away from your Church, either to Popery, or to any other Sect amongst us; then presently betake yourself to your Minister: And in these or the like Cases take Direction from him, and be sure to follow his wholesome Counsel, and desire his Prayers to God for you. I know in large Parishes, Ministers are not able to have a particular Knowledge of every Person; but yet all that know the Worth of Souls, and the Price that was paid for them, will be ready to give Attendance to the meanest of their People, that shall apply themselves to them for Advice and Comfort, and will be glad of all Opportunities to promote the Honour and Interest of their Saviour, and the Good of precious Souls committed to their Care.

And thus have I, as plainly and as fully as I well could in so little Room, directed you in that holy Way which leads to eternal Glory; and have
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shewn you what great Reason you have to walk in that Way, and to continue therein to the End. As to those who desire larger Directions, next to the holy Scriptures, (which I beseech you to read frequently with Humility and Seriousness, especially the New Testament) next to them I shall refer you only to that pious and most useful Book, *The Whole Duty of Man*. And I heartily wish that every poor Family in the Kingdom was furnished with one of those Books, together with a Bible and Common-Prayer Book, which might all be purchased for less than five Shillings; and therefore it is great Pity they should be any where wanting. Though, alas! I know there are many Families of poor People where none of them can read, and so Books to them are useless. Great Charity therefore it would be for rich Landlords and Gentlemen to see that the Children of their poor Tenants and Neighbours be put out to School; and then to bestow, at least, Bibles upon them, that the Knowledge of God and Religion may be promoted amongst them; which would greatly make for the Good and Welfare both of Church and State. For though brain-sick Opinions, and false Principles, may make Men proud and headstrong, and troublesome to their Governors; yet solid Knowledge and sincere Godliness will make Men humble and meek, quiet and peaceable, obedient to Magistrates and Ministers, full of Charity to their Neighbours, and ready to every good Work. And I am sure an Increase of this truly religious Temper would be one of the greatest Blessings that can be bestowed upon this Earth, and would settle Kingdoms, Towns and Families, in Peace and Concord, which almost every where are divided amongst themselves, as well as against one another. And by such blessed Effects of true Religion, something

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of Heaven would be brought down upon Earth, and our Souls would be well fitted for Heaven, when we are called off from this Earth into those happy Regions above, where there is nothing else but Peace and Holiness, and Love and Joy. And may it please God to bless these plain and short Instructions for the enlightning any Mind with that *Wisdom from above*, which is thus *pure and peaceable*, then shall I obtain my Design, and have great Cause to be thankful. And that the Reader may join with me in these Wishes, I have annexed hereto Morning and Evening Prayers both for Persons in private and for a Family. And if he will but add diligent Endeavours to frequent and fervent Prayers, neither his Labour nor mine will be in vain, through the Grace and Blessing of Almighty God, from whom comes every good and perfect Gift; to whom be given all Honour and Glory, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

A Grace before Meat.

O Lord, we beseech thee forgive us all our Sins, and bless us, and these thy good Creatures to our Use; and help us to love and serve thee, the Giver of all Good, for Jesus Christ his Sake. *Amen.*

A Grace after Meat.

O Lord, make us truly thankful for these and all other thy Mercies; and as we are maintained by thy Bounty, help us to live to thy Honour and Glory, for Jesus Christ his Sake. *Amen.*

A Prayer on coming into Church.

PRevent us, O Lord, in all our Doings with thy Grace, and grant that our coming together at this time may be for the better, and not for the worse, for Jesus Christ his Sake. *Amen.*

After Sermon.

GRant, I beseech thee, Almighty God, that the Words which I have heard this Day with my outward Ears, may thro' thy Grace be so grafted inwardly in my Heart, that they may bring forth in me the Fruit of good living, to the Honour and Praise of thy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Morning Prayer for a Person in Private.

GLORY be to thee, Lord God Almighty, for renewing thy Mercies to me every Morning, for refreshing me this Night with Sleep, and for preserving me from the Perils of Darknes. O do away as the Night, so my Transgressions; scatter my Sins as the Morning Clouds. Lord, forgive whatever thou hast seen amiss in me this Night. And, O Father of Mercies, let thy Holy Spirit prevent and accompany and follow me this Day, that I may believe in thee, and love thee, and keep thy Commandments, and continue in thy Fear all the Day long. Lord, deliver me from Sloth and Idleness, from sinful Lusts and ill Company, from all Dangers ghostly and bodily; and give me Grace to remember thee my Creator. Enlighten my Soul O Lord, with all Christian Knowledge, and endue me with all Christian Virtues.

Bless and defend the King, and all the Royal Family, and all Orders and Degrees of Men among us, Ecclesiastical or Civil: Lord, give them all

Grace, in their several Stations, to be instrumental to thy Glory, and the public Good. Together with them, bless this Family; all other my Relations, Friends, and Benefactors; and all that are in Affliction, Necessity, or Sicknefs. O Lord, pardon mine Enemies; and vouchsafe me all those Graces and Blessings, which thou knowest to be most suitable for me.

Unto thee, O my God, do I dedicate this Day, and my whole Life. O do thou so bless and prosper me in every thing that is good and commendable, that I may every Day grow more fit for thy Service. Hear me, O Lord, and pardon all my Failings, for the Merits of thy Son Jesus, in whose holy and perfect Words I sum up all my Wants:

Our Father, &c.

The Lord bless me, and keep me: The Lord lift up the Light of his Countenance upon me, and give me Peace, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer for a Person in Private.

HOLY, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; I thy frail and sinful Creature humbly acknowledge my manifold Offences against thee in Thought, Word, and Deed; but I fly into the Arms of thy fatherly Compassion. Lord, for thy Mercy's Sake, and for the Merits of thy dear Son, forgive me; cleanse me from my Wickedness, and strengthen my Weakness, that I may overcome all the Temptations which daily surround me, and continue constant in my Obedience.

Accept, O Lord, of my humblest Praise, and Thanksgiving for all the Goodness thou hast this Day shewed me; for all the Helps of preventing

and restraining Grace thou hast vouchsafed me ; for whatever I have done this Day, which is in any Manner acceptable to thee ; and for thy Preservation of me from all the Miseries and Dangers to which frail Mortality is every Moment exposed. Praised be the Lord, who saveth my Life from Destruction, and crowneth me with Mercy and Loving-kindness.

Bless and defend the King, and all the Royal Family, and all Orders and Degrees of Men among us, Ecclesiastical or Civil : Lord, give them all Grace, in their several Stations, to be instrumental to thy Glory, and the public Good. Together with them, bless this Family ; all other my Relations, Friends, and Benefactors ; and all that are in Affliction, Necessity, or Sickness. O Lord, pardon mine Enemies ; and vouchsafe to me all those Graces and Blessings, which thou knowest to be most suitable for me.

Lord, watch over me, and preserve me from Sin and Danger ; and let it be thy good Pleasure to refresh me this Night with such seasonable Rest, that I may rise the next Morning more fit for thy Service. Hear me, O Lord, and pardon all my Failings, for the Merits of thy Son Jesus, in whose holy and perfect Words I sum up all my Wants :

Our Father, &c.

The Lord bless me, and keep me : The Lord lift up the Light of his Countenance upon me, and give me Peace, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O Most Glorious and Eternal Lord God, who art righteous in all thy Ways, and holy in all thy Works, infinite in Mercy and Goodness to

all that call upon thee in Truth, and hast promised that where two or three are gathered together in thy Name, thou wilt be in the midst of them ; look down, we beseech thee, upon us thy unworthy Servants, who are here before thee, to present unto thy Divine Majesty the Morning Sacrifice of our unfeigned Praises ; acknowledging that in thee we live, move, and have our Being ; and that from thy bountiful Hand we have received all the good Things we enjoy, and by thy good Providence are defended from the Evils we deserve. We desire, O Lord, in an humble Sense of thy great Goodness towards us, to bless and praise thy holy Name : particularly we adore thy glorious Majesty for preserving us the past Night, for raising us up in Health and Safety, and for giving us this Opportunity of calling upon thy Name.

Our Father, &c.

An Evening Prayer for a Family.

MOST Gracious and Merciful God, who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and hast promised Mercy and Forgiveness to all them who confess and forsake their Sins ; we come before thee in an humble Sense of our own Unworthiness, acknowledging our manifold Transgressions of thy righteous Laws, in Thought, Word, and Deed : We have done those Things which thou hast forbidden, and left undone the Things which thou hast commanded ; so that, when we look back upon our past Lives, and remember that thou art privy to our most secret Sins, we are afraid of thy Judgments, and ashamed to lift up our Eyes unto thee. O most gracious Father, who desirest not the Death of a Sinner, look upon us, we beseech thee, in thy
Son

Son Jesus Christ; for the Merits of his Sufferings, be thou merciful to us in the Pardon of our Sins; make us deeply sensible of the great Evil and Danger of them, and work in us a hearty Contrition; and grant that the Remembrance of them may be more grievous and afflicting to us, than of any other Evil whatsoever; that we worthily lamenting our Transgressions, and being brought to a hearty Repentance and Amendment of Life, may obtain Forgiveness at thy Hands, who art ever ready to receive humble and penitent Sinners, for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer.

Our Father, &c.

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